



SOIL AND WATER *Resources*

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Landowner Surveys

Recently, the Soil and Water Conservation Program began sending surveys to landowners with their notice of payment letters. Through the surveys, the program office is collecting comments about both practices and services provided by the program. Landowners are asked to rate their understanding of the cost-share process, how well the requirements were explained, the service they received and their overall cost-share experience.

The feedback has been very positive, with a 37 percent return rate. Program staff will use the information to evaluate the policies and procedures for the cost-share practices and individual districts can use the information to assess their efforts in implementing cost-share practices.

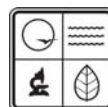
This is the first time that program staff has collected comments from landowners in this format. Surveys will continue to be sent out and the feedback will be compiled and sent to the districts at least annually. Your district should have recently received surveys for your county.

Workgroup Report

At the July 14 Soil and Water Districts Commission meeting, program director Bryan Hopkins shared his enthusiasm for the success of the first workgroup. The concept was to get all the relevant partners of the program together in a room and coordinate input on various elements of the program. The first workgroup met with a primary focus on the program's delivery of cost-share practices and the core functions of the program. They also initiated the first steps of a long-range strategic planning process that includes a five year objective of incorporating a marketing plan for the program. Over time, other workgroups will be assembled to address various topics relating to the Soil and Water Conservation Program.

Qualifying Criteria Updated

Qualifying Criteria questions were implemented in February for seeding practices. Refer to Memorandum 2010-028 for detailed information regarding the implementation of Qualifying Criteria. Program office staff has analyzed submitted contracts and qualifying criteria responses to determine eligibility of release of contract review. Additional Qualifying Criteria questions were implemented during MoSWIMS rollover. A spreadsheet showing the qualifying criteria questions for all practices was attached to Memorandum 2010-042. If you have any questions regarding this information, contact your district coordinator.



**Missouri Department
of Natural Resources**

Soil and Water Conservation Program

FY 2010 Financial Summary and FY 2011 Budget Allocation

Reporting as of July 6, 2010, the Soil and Water Conservation Program total expenditures for FY 2010 was \$38,679,934. Total revenue for FY 2010 was \$37,841,196. Cost-share landowner payments accounted for 51.87 percent or \$20,064,337. District grant expenditures were 28.56 percent or \$11,046,422. and SALT landowner payments totaled 11.95 percent or \$4,620,410.

The FY 2011 appropriated budget total is \$44,205,683 and includes:

- \$24,000,000 for Cost-Share.
- \$12,192,969 for district grant expenditures
- \$3,600,000 for SALT projects.

FY 2011 Allocation Adjustments

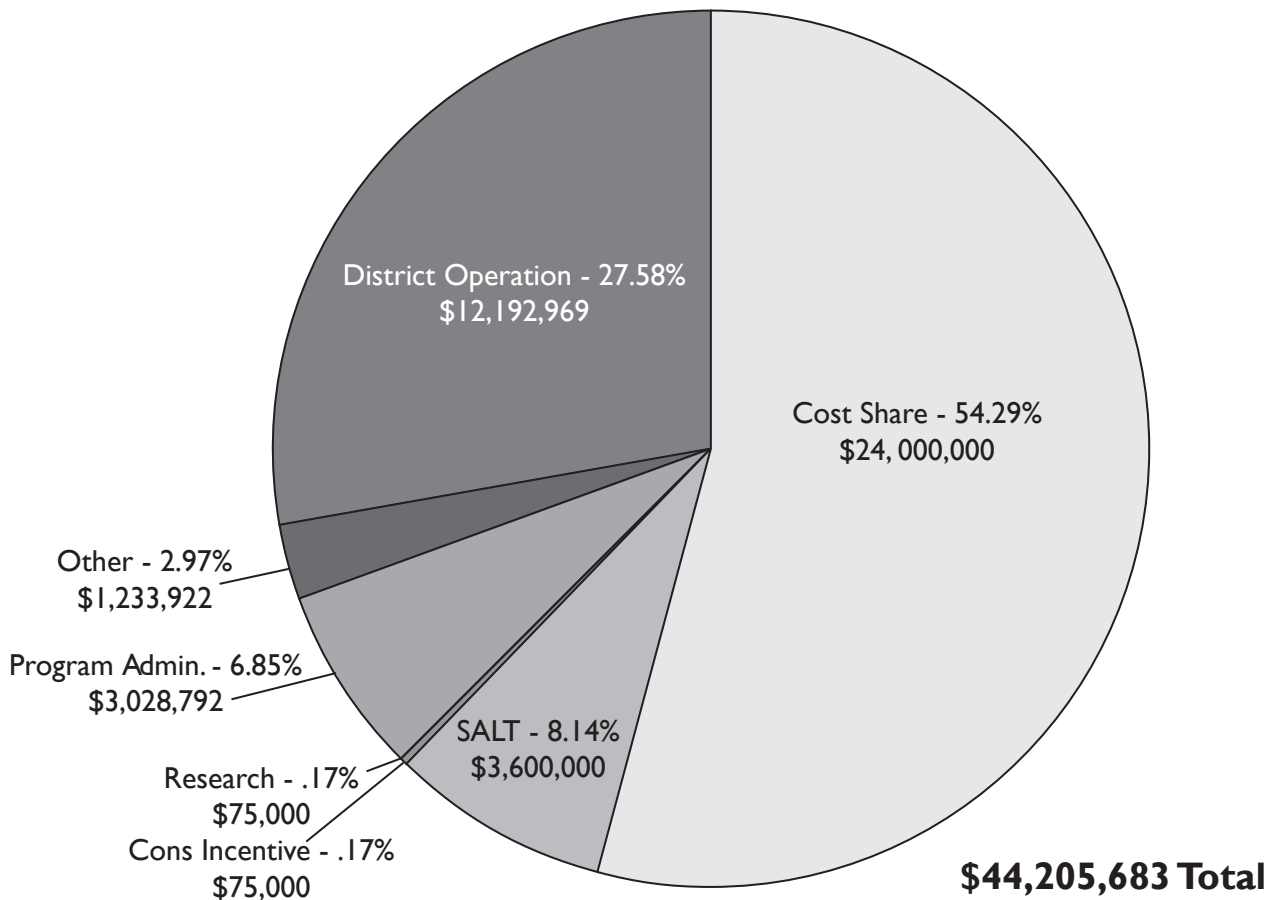
At the July meeting, the Soil and Water Districts Commission approved providing the districts that have utilized a substantial portion of their original allocation an additional allocation up to a maximum of \$5 million. This additional allocation would bring

the total allocation to \$27 million for the districts. This would reward the districts that have landowners actively engaged and would reduce allocations being based solely upon information contained in the needs assessments. A review will be completed at the end of Sept. to evaluate the landowner demand within each resource concern. Additional funds would be provided to districts within each resource concern where obligated and pending events have reached maximum of 70 percent of the funding.

FY2011 Grant Distribution

| | | |
|-----------------------------|---------------------|-------|
| Personnel Grant | \$7,512,875 | 64.3% |
| "Other" Personnel Grant | \$900,999 | 7.7% |
| Administrative Grant | \$627,000 | 5.3% |
| Information/Education Grant | \$115,951 | 1.0% |
| AgNPS Grant (nonpersonnel) | \$70,830 | .60% |
| Rent and Utilities | \$100,800 | .86% |
| Election Expenses | \$45,000 | .38% |
| Retirement | \$373,723 | 3.2% |
| Health Insurance | \$1,933,642 | 16.6% |
| Total Allocation | \$11,680,820 | |

FY2011 SWCP Appropriated Budget Allocation as of July, 6 2010



Area Meetings

Area meetings have been set and district employees and board supervisors are encourage to attend. Memo 2010-041 provides the information needed for your area. Check the schedule below to see the details about the meeting in your area.

| Date | City | Area | Location | Time |
|---------|-------------|------|---|-----------------------|
| Aug. 19 | Jackson | 8 | Cape Girardeau County University of MO Extension Center 684 W. Jackson Trail, off S. Hope St./Hwy. 25 South | 12:00 - 4:00 p.m. |
| Aug. 23 | West Plains | 7 | MDC-Ozark Regional Office 551 Joe Jones Blvd. | 9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. |
| Aug. 23 | Mt. Vernon | 6 | MU College of Ag - Southwest Center 14548 Hwy. H | 5:30 - 9:00 p.m. |
| Aug. 24 | Savannah | 1 | Clasby Center 500 E. Duncan Dr. | 12:00 - 4:00 p.m. |
| Aug. 25 | Chillicothe | 3 | Grand River Technical School - Ag Litton Community Center Hwy. 190 (1.5. miles west of US Hwy. 65) | 9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. |
| Aug. 25 | Sedalia | 4 | Best Western - State Fair Motor Inn 3120 S. 65 Hwy. | 5:30 - 9:00 p.m. |
| Aug. 26 | Shelbina | 3 | American Legion 520 E. Maple St. | 5:30 - 9:00 p.m. |
| Aug. 31 | Washington | 5 | Knights of Columbus Hall 1121 Columbus Dr. - Coming in on 100 West from Hwy. 47, turn right at Pottery Rd./Clay Ave. Intersection | 5:30 - 9:00 pm |

District Supervisor Election Results

Last year the commission adopted new election policies. A comparison was made of the FY 2008 and FY 2010 district supervisor elections and found very few differences. As the chart below shows, the average number of voters, candidates and votes cast were similar. The difference was the cost of the elections. In FY 2008, the cost was \$12,063 and in FY10 that amount was approximately \$54,000. To address this issue, the commission approved the establishment a workgroup to review and improve the election procedures.

| Election Year/Cost | Average Voters | Average Candidates | Average Votes Cast |
|----------------------|----------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| FY 08/\$12,063 | 34.2 | 3.34 | 63.4 |
| FY10/\$54,000 (est.) | 33.1 | 3.20 | 63.2 |

Cost-Share/MoSWIMS Manuals Released

Memorandum 2011-001 was sent on July 13, 2010 informing districts that the Cost-Share Handbook and MoSWIMS Manual had been updated and were available on the district intranet page effective immediately. In addition, due to numerous sections being updated, a hard copy was mailed to the districts.

The Cost-Share Handbook updates include:

- Integration of general commission policy information.
- Inclusion of information regarding the needs assessment process.
- Streamlining to make the handbook more concise.
- Removal of cross-references.
- Removal of duplicated information.
- Standardization of formatting to the Practices section.
- Clarification of "Acres Served" to be reported for all practices.

The MoSWIMS Manual was updated with additional, detailed information and new administrative system changes to clarify processes. Updates include an explanation of "Qualifying Criteria" within MoSWIMS, the scanning process and updated screenshots.



Nutrient Management Policy Changes

The following changes were approved for nutrient management policies:

- The N633 Waste Utilization Practice was combined with the N590 Nutrient Management Practice.
- The rate was reduced from \$30 to \$20 per acre effective Jan. 1, 2011, for all new enrollments in the nutrient management practice.
- Operators with a current Nutrient Management contract with a termination date of FY 2011 are eligible for an additional payment in FY 2012 in accordance with previous policy using the \$30 per acre.
- A contract must be board approved between Jan. 1 and April 15 and prior to any nutrients being applied.
- Nutrient plan must be developed prior to nutrients being applied.
- Contract payment can be issued after October 31 or after the crop is harvested, whichever is later.
- Operators may receive the lifetime maximum of \$10,000 from this practice. This will be monitored with MoSWIMS history reports.
- Nutrient management plan for a particular field must be followed in consecutive years.

Pest Management Policy Changes

The following changes were approved by the Commission for pest management policies:

- The rate is reduced from \$15 to \$10 per acre.
- A contract must be approved by April 15 and cannot be paid until after Oct. 31.
- Operators are only eligible for a lifetime maximum of \$5,000 for this practice. This will be monitored with MoSWIMS history reports.

All acres of the field are considered for the incentive when spot treatments are applied on at least 75 percent of the field.

Subirrigation/Drainage Management Study Research Update

Dr. Michael Aide from Southeast Missouri State University presented information to the commission at its May 12 meeting. Dr. Aide was awarded \$5,000 from the commission's research funding to study effects of sub-irrigation and drainage water management efforts.

Dr. Aide updated the commission on the project and provided copies of the project reports to commissioners.

He stated crop growth and development were optimized using this system with corn and soybeans reaching near record levels for the county.

The water quality data indicated:

- The transport of nitrate nitrogen in the tile-drain effluent waters was appreciable. Soil denitrification pathways do not effectively reduce soil nitrate nitrogen.
- The best strategy for reducing nitrate concentrations in the tile-drain effluent waters was adjusting nitrogen fertilization rates and timing of application.

Dr. Aide also concluded that transport of microelements in tile drainage was very limited in this system.

MRBI Projects

The Governor specifically recognized the remarkable efforts of the program and several of the SWCP districts in successfully competing for this funding at the July 14 Commission meeting. As a result of these efforts, over \$28 million in additional conservation funding will be made available to Missouri landowners over the next 5 years. The implementation of these additional cost share practices will help to mitigate the introduction of excess nutrients not only into Missouri streams, but also into the Gulf of Mexico. The monitoring goals of these projects will also assist in our understanding of methods to decrease nutrient loading of our water resources.

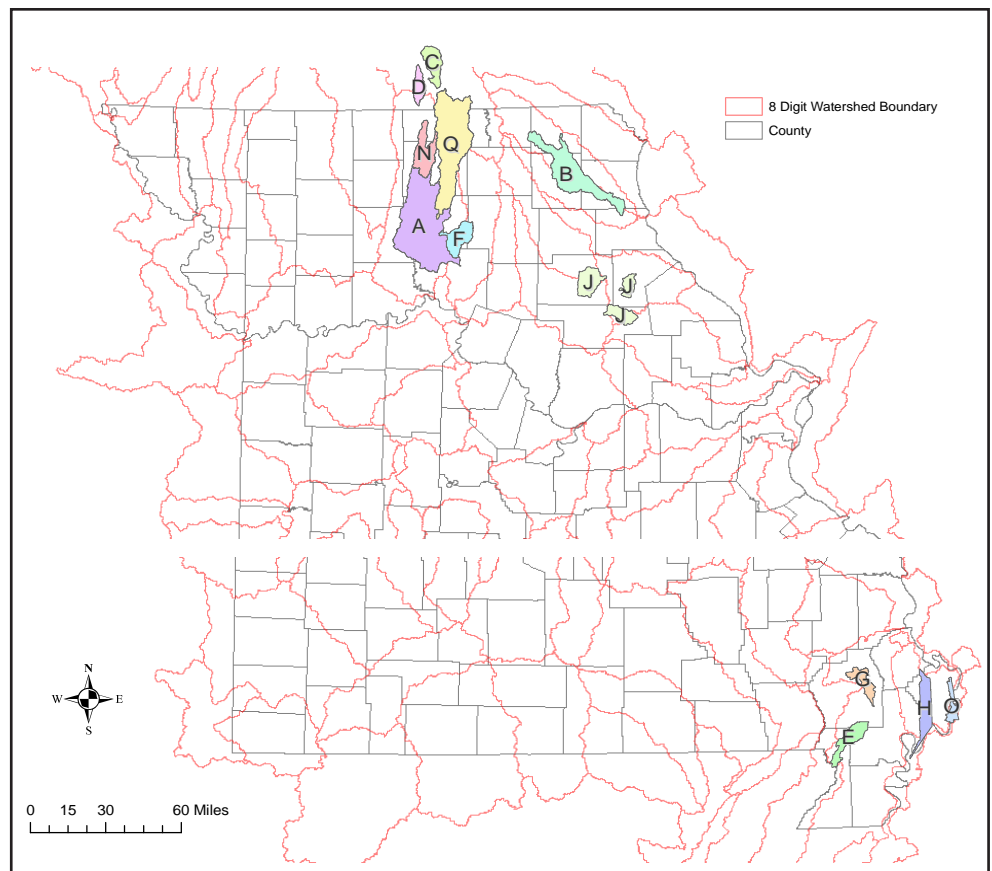
The following districts have an involvement with MRBI projects and a total of 12 projects were successfully awarded funding and are to be congratulated for their efforts in this regard: Adair, Audrain, Boone, Butler, Callaway, Carroll, Chariton, Grundy, Knox, Linn, Livingston, Macon, Mercer, Monroe, New Madrid, Pemiscot, Putnam, Shelby, Stoddard and Sullivan. The MRBI projects are located in 20 soil and water districts, 59 12-digit HUC small watersheds and all six of the 8-digit HUC large watersheds. Those watersheds are the Lower Grand, North Fork Salt, South Fork Salt, Little River Ditches, Lower St. Francis, and Cache River Basins.

The state of Missouri was awarded the highest number of MRBI projects and the greatest level of funding out of the 12 Mississippi River Basin states eligible for this program. These efforts not only will assist our agricultural community towards stewardship of our natural resources, but also show the public the value of the program and what makes the Missouri Soil and Water Program the premier state soil and water conservation program in the nation.

MRBI State Eligible for Funds

| State | CCPI Projects Funded | 2010 CCPI Funding | Average Funding per Project |
|-----------------|----------------------|---------------------|-----------------------------|
| Missouri | 12 | \$6,026,750 | \$502,229 |
| Iowa | 8 | \$1,609,792 | \$201,224 |
| Minnesota | 7 | \$1,931,679 | \$275,954 |
| Indiana | 6 | \$589,813 | \$98,302 |
| Arkansas | 5 | \$1,789,000 | \$357,800 |
| Illinois | 4 | \$1,318,333 | \$329,583 |
| Mississippi | 3 | \$4,460,000 | \$1,486,667 |
| Kentucky | 3 | \$1,500,000 | \$500,000 |
| Tennessee | 3 | \$784,350 | \$261,450 |
| Louisiana | 3 | \$325,414 | \$108,471 |
| Ohio | 2 | \$1,571,600 | \$785,800 |
| Wisconsin | 2 | \$359,038 | \$179,519 |
| Totals | 58 | \$22,265,769 | \$383,893 |
| Averages | 5 | \$1,855,481 | \$383,893 |

| | Project Name | 4 Year Project Award |
|---|---|----------------------|
| A | Livingston and Carroll - Lower Grand | \$8,500,000 |
| B | Shelby - Mark Twain Lake - North Fork Salt | \$3,300,000 |
| C | Putnam - Headwaters Medicine and Buckworth | \$1,561,000 |
| D | Audrain - Goodwater Creek - South Fork Salt | \$2,365,000 |
| E | Mercer - Upper Little Medicine | \$263,400 |
| F | Butler - Water Quality Initiative | \$1,000,000 |
| G | Chariton - "Show-Me" Conservation | \$2,894,200 |
| H | Stoddard - Mud Creek/ Mingo Ditch | \$809,400 |
| I | Grundy - Medicine and Muddy | \$650,000 |
| J | New Madrid - West Sikeston Ridge | \$1,250,000 |
| K | Linn and Sullivan - Locust Creek | \$3,640,000 |
| | Totals | \$28,288,800 |



Partnership Memorandum of Understanding to be Updated

The Partnership Memorandum of Understanding, or MOU, between the Soil and Water Conservation Districts Commission, Soil and Water Conservation Districts, and the Natural Resources Conservation Service will soon be updated. The previous MOU was agreed upon in 1997.

With the passage of the Farm Bill, there were additional privacy regulations regarding the administration of producers/landowners information. To address this element, the current Memorandum of Understanding needed to be updated. NRCS has provided a copy of the MOU for program staff to review and offer comments on items that required updating. Current plans are to complete updates to the MOU later this fall.

Soil and Water Conservation Districts Audits

Between 25 and 30 soil and water conservation districts will be audited each year for the next four years. Auditors are being contracted through the Department of Natural Resources. Districts will be chosen randomly or a district can request to be placed on the list of districts to be audited.

After the audits are complete, a report on the results will be presented to the Soil and Water Districts Commission.

Pembroke Hill High School Wins 2010 Missouri Envirothon

Pembroke Hill High School took the top spot in the 2010 Missouri Envirothon. The 19-team competition took place on April 13 at the Runge Conservation Nature Center in Jefferson City.

Students competed at five different outdoor testing stations- aquatic ecology, forestry, soils and land use, wildlife and the 2010 current conservation issue, Protection of Groundwater Through Urban, Agricultural and Environmental Planning.

Test stations required the five-student teams to answer a variety of both hands-on and written natural resource questions. Each team also presented an oral presentation to a panel of judges.

The top three teams from each of Missouri's

seven regional competitions competed at the state Envirothon. The winning team went on to compete in the 2010 Canon Envirothon, North America's largest high school environmental competition, in Fresno, Calif. To learn more about the Missouri Envirothon, including previous team rankings and regulations, visit the Missouri Association of Soil and Water Conservation District's Envirothon Web site or contact the Soil and Water Conservation Program at 573-751-4932. Local soil and water conservation districts, in conjunction with cooperating agencies and educators, organize and run local Envirothon competitions.

In 1998, Missouri held its first state Envirothon. The Envirothon was started in 1979 by three Pennsylvania soil and water conservation districts. By 1988, the idea had caught on and the first national contest was held. By 2009, the program attracted participation from U.S. states and territories and Canada.



District Accounting Software Coming Soon

An update was given on the district accounting software at the July Commission meeting. This Web-based system is part of MoSWIMS and is in the final stages of in-house testing. Nine pilot districts began testing the software in late July. The plan is to have the program implemented by FY 2012.

Several benefits the system has include:

- Statewide reports can be ran anytime on expenditures of the district.
- Eliminate dual entries and it provides electronic submission with receipts and transactions being scanned by the district and sent to the program office.

Time Reporting Update

At the Oct. 21, 2009 meeting the commission approved developing a time reporting system for the districts to use. Program staff has been working with programming contractors and pilot districts to develop the system.

The pilot districts include

- Butler.
- Bollinger.
- Saline.
- Ray.

Benefits presented to the commission include:

- Consistent timesheets related to leave accrual, compensation time based on Federal law.
- Track time on all activities.
- Give credit to activities that may not lead to cost-share practices.
- The board and program office would be able to run district and state-wide reports.

Program staff is also developing a webinar training and user guide that will be used for training district employees. A report will be given at all the area meetings this year.

Toolkit/CMT Integration

Districts may soon have another tool to assist them in conservation planning efforts. A report was given at the commission meeting on the Toolkit/CMT integration between the Natural Resources Conservation Service and the program. The concept is similar to the process used by Technical Service Providers. The Program is still working with USDA to get the approval to proceed with

this endeavor. When completed, the district would be able to pull a map out of Toolkit, make changes to the farm plan through a GIS program. Once the necessary updates are made, the concept is to be able to place the updated map into the Toolkit database. There are many advantages to complete this integration of the software. The main advantage is to have one database for all the agricultural farm programs related to conservation work and reduce the amount of staff time doing dual entry. The goal is for Missouri to be the first state pilot for this tool.

Meet the New District Coordinator – Jennifer Johnson

On April 26, the Soil and Water Conservation Program welcomed the new district coordinator, Jennifer Johnson.

She will oversee districts in the north central area of the state. She came to the program from the Department of Natural Resources' Hazardous Waste Program, where she worked for four years.

Johnson has a bachelor's degree in agriculture/conservation and wildlife management from Missouri State University in

Springfield. She is excited about being able to work

in her area of study. Outdoor activities encompass her free time, so she wants to play an integral role in conserving the resources that she enjoys. She looks forward to working with and learning a lot from her districts. "And let's face it, the smell of soil just can't be beat," said Johnson.

Johnson grew up in Willow Springs, Mo. Although her family didn't farm, she spent a lot of time working and playing on her best friend's dairy farm. Today, she is a novice naturalist and enjoys trying to identify snakes, birds, trees and wildflowers. She also dabbles in opera singing, backpacking, floating (via tube, canoe, kayak or whatever), cycling, running and reading books. She likes writing stories about the fantastic and sometimes terrifying encounters with nature. Hiking on the Katy Trail with her dogs, Frick and Ella, is another of her favorite activities. Her dream is to one day own a farm complete with cows, goats, plenty of barn cats and a trusty mule named Earl.





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Editor: Judy Stinson

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